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MISSILE SECRECY CHARGED TO G.O.P.

Symington Says Data on
'Gap' Was Withheld From
Kennedy in Campaign

Special to The New York Times
WASHINGTON, Feb. 9—Senator Stuart Symington said today that information on the "missile gap" was withheld from President Kennedy by the Eisenhower Administration during the election campaign last fall.

The Missouri Democrat said that if Mr. Kennedy had been given "adequate information," then, he would now "be in a better position to tell the American people the facts about the missile gap." His remarks came in a debate set off in the Senate

by Republican gibes at President Kennedy on the issue.

The President said at his news conference yesterday that he was awaiting the completion of studies before determining whether the United States was lagging behind the Soviet Union in long-range, nuclear-armed, ballistic missiles.

The President's statement was prompted by newspaper articles that studies by his Administration had indicated tentatively that the "missile gap" had not materialized.

Campaign Talks Recalled

The term described a situation, based on United States plans and estimates of Soviet capabilities, that the United States could be behind the Russians in ballistic missiles during the period of 1960-63.

President Kennedy's statement yesterday that the facts had not been ascertained contrasted with his campaign assertion that there was a "missile gap." It inspired the

Republicans to start a floor debate in the Senate.

In reply, Senator Symington declared:

"If there hadn't been a calculated and deliberate effort on the part of the previous Administration to prevent him [Mr. Kennedy] from obtaining adequate information as late as last fall—and I know what I'm talking about—he would be in a better position to tell the American people the facts about the missile gap."

Nominees Were Briefed

Mr. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson, his running mate, received briefings from Allen W. Dulles, director of the Central Intelligence Agency, during the campaign, on instructions from President Eisenhower. The briefings were in accordance with past campaign practices.

The debate began when Senator Everett McKinley Dirksen of Illinois inserted newspaper articles in The Congressional Record. These were said to have

emanated from a background meeting held for reporters by Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara.

Mr. Dirksen, the Republican leader in the Senate, said he had written to Mr. McNamara, asking whether such a briefing had been held and whether the view that no "missile gap" existed had been expressed.

Two Democratic Senators, Hubert H. Humphrey of Minnesota, and Henry M. Jackson of Washington, echoed sentiments expressed by Republicans in earlier debates on the issue. They said missile numbers were not so important as overall strength.

Senator Jackson said the Soviet "clearly" had more combat-ready intercontinental ballistic missiles than the United States at this time.

However, Senator Jackson continued, "We do have a missile deterrent," and he cited the country's long-range bombers. This recalled similar arguments by Republicans that cited a "mix" of weapons when criticized on missile policies.